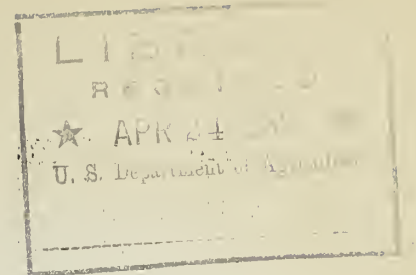


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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

The Canning Season Opens

A radio interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Morse Salisbury, Radio Service, broadcast Tuesday, April 9, 1935, in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour, by NBC and a network of 50 associate radio stations.

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MR. SALISBURY: Well, Miss Van Deman, how are you standing all this cloudy, rainy weather?

MISS VAN DEMAN: I'm bearing up all right. But, "it is not raining rain to me, it's raining -"

MR. SALISBURY: "Violets" I know that poem too.

MISS VAN DEMAN: No. It's raining asparagus!

MR. SALISBURY: Asparagus? How come?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, you see I had a letter from a lady in Pennsylvania.

MR. SALISBURY: Did she say she was sending you a bunch of asparagus?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Not exactly. She asked me about canning asparagus.

MR. SALISBURY: Oh, she fired the first gun of the 1935 home canning season?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes. At least she reminded me that it was time to open the canning season on the Farm and Home Hour. Here's her letter:

"I have quite a lot of asparagus that will be ready for cutting for the first time this year. As there is only the three of us I will not be able to use it all while it is in season. So would like to can it. I wonder if you could tell me just how long to boil it in the hot bath. I have a cold pack boiler. I cold pack cauliflower, carrots, and spinach. But they go soft for me. I think I cook them too long. If you have a bulletin on the cold packing of the above mentioned vegetables would like very much to have it."

MR. SALISBURY: Did you send her a bulletin on canning asparagus?

MISS VAN DEMAN: I did. But not by the cold-pack, water-bath method. Our bulletin recommends the hot-pack, steam-pressure method as the one and only way to can asparagus. Or any other non-acid vegetable for that matter.

(over)

MR. SALISBURY: And what are the vegetables you call non-acid? I know I've heard you say when you talked about canning last summer, but my memory gets a little rusty over winter. So go ahead and educate me once more on these non-acid vegetables.

MISS VAN DEMAN: The non-acid vegetables take in just about every kind except tomatoes. And pickled beets, of course. Plain beets, the little fellows called baby beets that you sometimes can, are distinctly non-acid. When you pour a lot of vinegar over them to pickle them, that of course makes it possible to treat them as an acid vegetable. But ordinary beets without vinegar; asparagus; peas; beans of all kinds, snap or lima; corn; spinach and all the other greens, - they're all non-acid vegetables.

To can vegetables of this kind so they will keep and so you will have a safe product, you need to apply much more intense heat than you can possibly get in a boiling water bath.

MR. SALISBURY: Your friend up in Pennsylvania said she boiled her's so long they went soft on her.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Maybe so. But also maybe that softness was a form of spoilage. Bacteria you know can do mighty queer things to food inside of cans, as well as out in the open. And the only safe thing is follow the advice of the bacteriologists and process canned foods at a temperature that will kill the bacteria. Don't fool yourself. The bacteria are there though you couldn't see them unless you had a powerful microscope and did a regular scientific test.

MR. SALISBURY: And I suppose a vegetable like asparagus that shoots up from the ground where bacteria swarm by the billions and trillions may carry a particularly heavy load of these invisible enemies of the home canner.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, that's so.

MR. SALISBURY: Well, what do your canning experts say is the best way to can asparagus at home?

MISS VAN DEMAN: I'm going to read you the answer right out of Farmers' Bulletin 1471. I can't improve on these directions:

"Asparagus for canning must be fresh and tender. Pick over carefully, discard any imperfect pieces, sort according to size, and wash thoroughly. Tie the asparagus in uniform bundles, place in a saucepan, with boiling water over the tough portion only, cover tightly, and boil for two or three minutes; or cut in half-inch lengths, add enough water to cover, and boil for two minutes in an uncovered vessel. Pack boiling hot into containers, cover with the water in which boiled, and add 1 teaspoon of salt to each quart. Process immediately at 10 pounds pressure, or 240° F., quart glass jars for 35 minutes, pint glass jars and No. 2 and No. 3 tin cans for 30 minutes."

There are the directions for canning asparagus. You see it is only by holding steam under pressure, as in a steam pressure canner, that you can get the high temperature needed to kill the bacteria in the non-acid vegetables like asparagus.

MR. SALISBURY: Miss Van Deman, do you know what I'd do?

MISS VAN DEMAN: No, what?

MR. SALISBURY: Well, if I had an asparagus bed in my garden and was planning to can some for next winter, I'd send for your Farmers' Bulletin 1471, and nail the time tables to my kitchen wall. And I'd get a steam pressure canner some way.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Good for you. And maybe if you don't want to take the cash to buy a pressure canner all your own, perhaps you could work up a plan with some of your neighbors to buy one cooperatively. Lots of farm people have done this with great success.

MR. SALISBURY: That's a good suggestion. Thank you, Miss Van Deman.

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